

Tunisiennes En Devenir

The Becoming of Tunisian Women

Collective Writing

Fatima Mernissi, the famous Moroccan feminist instigated a dozen of Tunisian feminists to express themselves in writing. United under the auspices of L'Association des Femmes Tunisienne pour la Recherche et le Development (AFTURD) - The Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development - they gathered in a writing workshop. Hence, they produced two volumes (in French) of a series they called *Tunisiennes en Devenir* - *The Becoming of Tunisian Women*.

The first volume entitled *Comment Vivent les Femmes - How Women Live*,⁽¹⁾ concentrates on patriarchy in general, illustrating traditional status and oppression. It includes the story of a midwife who also witnesses female circumcision. Another chapter portrays the male/female dichotomy by describing love in the (traditional) feminine context i.e. submissive and responsible for cultural preservation of men's honour. In another chapter, yet, we are called on to discover the link between the richness of the kitchen and erotic joy, thus implying that the kitchen and the table are women's domain to power. The last chapter tells of the life of a wife-mother whose conflicts soon explode in writing.

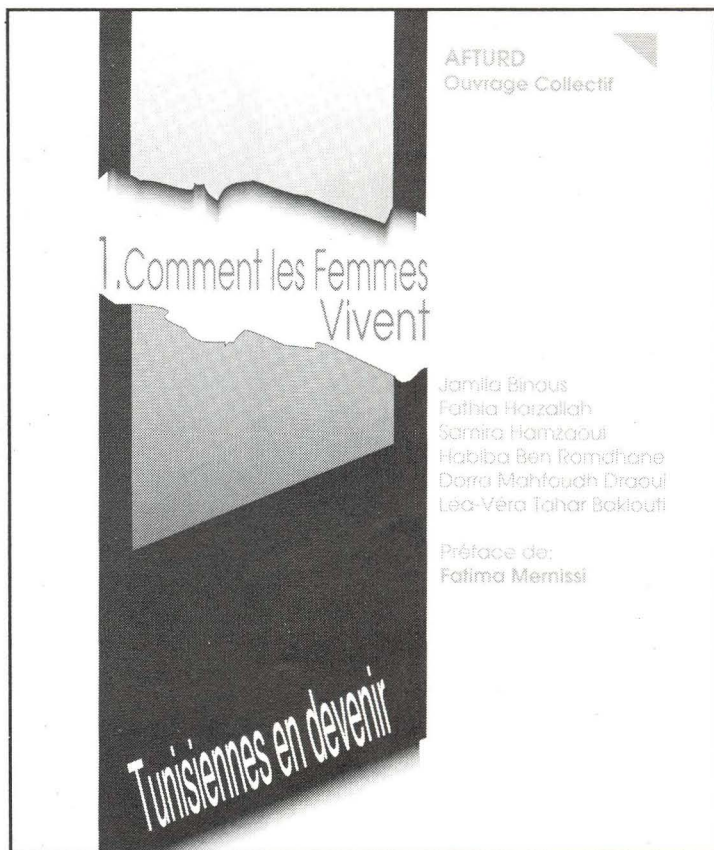
The second volume entitled *La Moitie Entiere - The Entire Half* is an invitation to a journey through individual thoughts and paths. It enlightens Maghreb's destiny and

describes the bonds between women, ideologies, and society in Tunisia. Perception of "feminism" by men has resulted in a dynamic ideology of national revival.

Furthermore, women today have decided to take charge over their own destinies.

The first part of this book describes the feminine model as stated in the dominant ideology

present since the independence of Tunisia. The second part shows that the woman who we think is spared from crises and enshrined in an unaltered spatiality and is almost sacred is in motion and under the risks of material and social conditions which do not tread her paths. A series of texts on feminism show that the Tunisian woman has emerged from a real and symbolic seclusion to reexamine her singularity and to trace a path for a new feminine model at the height of her aspirations.



(1) Jamila Binous, Fathia Harzallah, Samira Hamzaoui, Habiba Ben Romdhane, Dorra Mahfoudh Draoui, Lea-Vera Tahar Baklouti and Preface by Fatima Mernissi. **Comment Vivent Les Femmes. Tunisiennes En Devenir** - AFTURD, Ouvrage Collectif. Tunis Ceres Productions. 1992. ISBN 9973-700-77-5 or 9973-700-74-0(1).

(2) Zeina Ben Said Chemi, Amel Ben Aba, Souad Triki, Hayet Gribaa, Rachida Ennaifer, and preface by Fatima Mernissi. **La Moitie Entiere. Tunisiennes En Devenir.** - ISBN 9973-700-75-9 (2)